

The Whole  
LIFE and DEATH  
OF  
LONG MEG,  
OR  
WESTM. LONGSTAFFE.



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# THE HISTORY OF LONG MEG OF WESTMINSTER

C. F. P.

Where Meg was born, and coming up to London, and her way to the honest parson.

IN the time of Henry VIII. was born in Lancashire, a maid called LONG MEG. At eighteen years old she came to London to seek her a husband. Father Willis the Coachman being the Waggoner and her neighbour, brought her up with some other girls. After a tedious journey, being come into sight of the desired city she demanded of the coachman, "What they looked for?" — "We have no money laid out, to buy you a new suit of apparel. If that be so, then tell me what you demand, and

this put them in some comfort. But as soon as they came to St. John's Street, Willis demanded the money. Say what you will have, quoth she. Ten shillings a piece, said he. But we have not so much about us, said she.—Nay, then, will have it out of your bones.—Marry, content replied Meg; and taking a staff in her hand, and an old angel to draw in her



hand, so belaboured him and his son that he desired her for God's sake to hold her hand.—Not I, said she. When you besaw an angel on me for goodness, and swarfer we deat'ing geras geras mistakes.

The carrier having felt the strength of her arm, thought it best to give her the money, and promised her that when he had got them good place

## C H A P T E R

Of her being placed in Westminster, and  
what she did at her Place.

**T**HIS Carrier having set up his horses,  
went with the lasses to the Eagle in  
Westminster, and told the Landlady he  
had three fine Lancashire  
horses, and a mare, and a foal, and that  
she might see them all when she  
would. Many of the lasses at  
Westminster and the neighbouring  
towns give their opinion. As soon  
as she came in, they staled themselves  
singing,

" Domine, Domine, vice Originem."  
— " Come, come, come, down, down, down,  
My mother forsooth had the brick  
— And when you see me, do I. She  
said she had not been bred up in her  
country, and had no money, and  
she had not a farthing, and she had  
not a farthing, and she had not a farthing,  
and she had not a farthing, and she had not a farthing,

Mistrels, said she, if any such come, let me know, and I'll make them pay. I'll engage.—Nay, this is true, said the carrier, for my carcase felt it; and then he told them how she served him.—On this Sir John de Castile, in a brayado, would needs make an experiment of her vast strength, and asked her, If she durst change a box o'the ear with him. quoth she, if my mistress will give me leave. This grieved, she stood to receive Sir John's blow, who gave her a box with all his might; but it stirred her not at all; but Meg gave him such a memorandum on his ear that Sir John fell down at her feet. — By my faith, said another, If I strikes a blow like an ox, for the last knocked down an ass. — So Meg was taken into service.



## C H A P. III.

The Method Meg took to make one of  
the Vicars pay his Score.

MEG so besirred herself, she pleased  
her mistress, and for her tallness  
was called Long Meg of Westminster.—

One of the rubbers of the Abbey Riddell  
minored by her strength for some time  
six of his associates one Friday  
Ballony a pot of ale, which being  
sett affred what he owed ? to which he  
answred, Five Shillings and a six pence.

Other foul scullion, I owe thee but  
three shillings and one penny, and no  
more will I pay thee. And turning to  
his landlady, complained how Meg had  
charged her too much. The foul ill  
name me quoth Meg, if I misreckon him  
one penny's and therefore Vicar, before  
thou goest out of these doors, I shall make  
thee pay every penny; and then the im-  
mediately lent him such a box on the ear,  
as made him to reel again. The Vicar  
then steps up to her, and together both

of them by the ears. — The Vicar's head was broken, and Meggs clothe it off her back. So the Vicar laid hold of her hair, but he being shaved, she could not have that advantage; so laying hold of his ears, and keeping his pate to the post, asked him how much he owed her? As much as you please, said he. — So you knave, quoth she, I must knock out of



your bald pate my reckoning. And with that she began to beat a plain song betwix the post and his pate. — But when he felt such pain, he ran off to the vicarage to pay the whole. — But she would not let him go, until he laid it down, which he did, being jeered by his friends.

THE HISTORY OF MEG MURFESS.

to blot it. — **CHAP. IV.**

Other fighting and conquering Sir James  
did not cease, and knightly

and honourable he was.

**A**T this time Sir James continued  
his suit to Meg's Mistress; but to  
no purpose. So coming in one day, and  
seeing her melancholy, asked what ailed  
her? And if any one had injured her, I  
will revenge her. — Meg replied, — Maister  
a bise! — And a wifie I have indeed, but  
she abuseth me, and I cannot venge my self  
well. — That shal be done, — said Sir James  
soon after. — But Meg said, — No, Sir  
Doctor go along with me, and you shall  
not help the knave.

— No, this they agreed, and then Meg  
said, — George's, — It's before-hand, — con-  
dered, said she, — walks the fellow by the  
Bram-cum-mill. — Follow me hostess, said Sir  
James, I will go to him. — But Meg  
saif as if his would have gone by.

Nay, stayd said Sir James, yond night  
I did not sojourn there, gentlemen and  
champions and, fairly for her sake, will  
have you by the ears. — With that Meg  
drew her sword, and ~~soe~~ they went.

At the first blow she hit him on the  
head, and often endanger'd him. — At  
last she struck his ~~spoon~~ out of his  
hands, and stepping up to him swore  
all the world should know him. — O  
save me, Sir, said he, I have done wrong, and  
it is but a woman that doth me wrong, —  
I will not spill my blood. — ~~soe~~ I have done wrong,  
said Meg, and was the King himself I  
would not spare thy life, but I do  
grant me one thing, — If he returneth  
will, you shall be obeyed. — MARRY, said  
she, that this night you wait on me  
at this woman's house, and come to me  
to my self after.

This being yielded to, and no objection  
provided, Thomas Usher and others  
invited to make up the party, and  
whom Sir James told what had hap-  
pened. — Now said Usher, ~~it~~ is nothing  
no such great disservice for to be done  
by an English gentleman, since Captain  
Great was himself driven back by

extraordinary courage? At this juncture Meg came in, having got on her man's attire.—Then said Sir James, This is that



valiant gentleman whose courage I shall ever esteem. Herewith the pulling off her hat, her hair fell about her ears, and she said, I am no other than Long Meg of the Bamburgh; and so you are heartily welcome.

At this they all fell a laughing, never having at supper-time, according to agreement, Sir James was a proper page; and having leave of her mistress, sat in state before her Majesty.—Thus Sir James was disgraced for his low, and Meg was exalted a proper woman.

CHAP.

C H A P. V.

Her Usage to the Bailiff of Westminster,  
who came into her Mistress's and ar-  
rested her Friend.

**A** Bailiff having for the purpose took forty shillings, arrested a gentleman in Meg's mistress's house, and desired the company to keep peace. She coming in asked what was the matter? O friend I'm arrested.—Arrested! and in our house! why this is an unkind act to arrest one in our house; but however take an Angel, and let him go. No said the Bailiff, I cannot, for the creditor is at the door. Bid him come in says she, and I will see up the matter. So the creditor came in but being found obstinate, she smote him on the head with a quill pen. Bid him go out of doors like a knave, I can dur go to prison for him, but he shall not stay long, I'll tell him I have can fetch him out.

The creditor went away without knock, and the Bailiff was going with

“I’ll be back, Nay, said she, I’ll bring a fresh  
pot to drink with him. She came into  
the parlour with a rope and knitting her-  
self. Sir Knave, said she, I’ll learn thee  
what a man is in our house, I’ll make  
you a spectacle for all catchpoles; and  
wrapping the rope round his middle, said to  
the gentleman, Sir, away, shift for your-  
self, I’ll pay the bailiff his fees before he  
comes near. Then she dragged the bailiff  
to the back side of the house, making  
him go up to the chin in a pond, and then  
beat him his fees with a cudgel; after  
which she went away with the amends in  
her hands; for she was a well beloved  
woman, no person would meddle with her.

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## CHAPTER VI

Of better meeting with the Nobles than I and  
the Duke of York, and no fit occasion for  
the Duke to him and the Watch.

Now it happened she once put on a  
suit of man's apparel. The same  
night it fell out, a young nobleman being  
espoused for month, would go abroad to  
see the fashions, and coming down to the  
town, espies her, and seeing such a gall-  
low, asked him whether he wanted  
a wife? — Marry, laid she, to Sir N.  
buy a calve's head. How much money  
st thou? In faith said she, little enough  
I warrant thee — A —  
Putting his thumb in his mouth  
he says a tester. She gave him  
a pence, and said Take  
with you two pence more  
No, said she, I will not have  
thee to be a constable, for if I do  
you go to bed with me. —  
a little farther's thop, where  
the Constable came in  
? and having asked what he

the nobleman told his name, at which they all pulled off their caps — And what is your name, said the Constable ? Mine, said she, is Cuthbert Carry, knave. — Upon this the constable commanded some to lay hold on her, and carry her to the Compter. — She out with her sword and clubs. Meg was forced to cry out. — Masters, hold your hands, I am your friend ; hurt not Long Meg of Westminster. — So they all laid their hands, and the nobleman took them all to the tavern ; and thus ended the fray.



## C H A P. V H.

Meg goes a shroving, fights the Thieves of St. James's Corner, and makes them restore Father Willis the Carrier his hundred Marks.

NOT only the cities of London and Westminster, but Lancashire also, heard of Meg's fame: so they desired old Willis the carrier to call upon her, which did, taking with him the other lasses. Meg was joyful to see them, and it being Rove-Tuesday, Meg went with them to Knightsbridge, and there spent most of the day, with repeating tales of their pastime. Lancashire, and so tarried there. Meg, who again and again enquired what did there; and made the time shorter than it was. The top winging up, the eagles and the crows, which were importunate to be gone. Meg was loath to let them go, but said, I will discharge you all, and promised to overtake them.

It was their misfortune at St. James's  
Compt to meet with two thieves, who  
waiting there for their prey, set on them,  
and took an hundred marks from Willie  
the Carrier, and from the Wench their  
gowns and purses. Meg came up im-  
mediately, and, seeing her in a female habit, thought to  
take her purse also; but she behaved her-  
self so well, they began to give her quid  
to her fair Meg. Our gown and purse  
against your hundred marks; win all and  
wear all. — Content, quoth they. — Now  
lasses pray for me, said Meg. — With the  
one buckled with the other, that they can  
one, and so hurt the other, that they can  
treat her to, spare their lives. — I will  
first give you conditions. — Then and  
all be thine.

That you never hurt a woman  
any company she is in.

That you never hurt a woman in  
any company she is in.

That you never hit any child  
in any company she is in.

That you rob no carrier of his  
goods.

That you rob no carrier of his  
goods.

- 5 - That you rob no manner of man for difference.

Are you content with these conditions? We are, said they. I have no book about me, said the girl, and I pass the time at my neck tail, by which they exceedingly did, and then she returned the weapons, their gowns and puffs, and told Basher, With the Captain a hundred marks.

The young desirous to know who of us had sumptuously deswinged them, said to alleviate their sorrow, pray tell us your name? — She smiling, replied, If any one tell you who bangles your horses, say, Long Meg of Westminster, once met with you. In a dozen and two or three hours



## C H A P. VIII. NOV. 31 A.

Meg's Fellow-Servant pressed her Usage  
of the Constable, and of her taking  
Preſs-Money to go to Bologna.

**I**N those days were wars between England and France, and a hot press about London. The Constables of Westminster pressed Meg's fellow-servant and told them if they took him there this was undone. All this could not persuade the Constable, but Harry would go to him which did not the Constable a knock. Not being given to the Captain, he asked why he struck him? Harry, saith Meg, I do and if I did not love soldiers. So taking a sword from Harry's hand, she performed that deed with such dexterity that they wondered what weapon she had. Preſs no man, give me preſs-money, and I will go my self. At this they all laughed, and Captain gave her an Angel. Without the went with him to Bologna.

C H A P.

## C H A P. IX.

After beating the Frenchmen off the walls of Bologne, for which gallant behaviour she is rewarded by the King with eight-pence per Day for Life.

THE KING having passing the seas, took Bologne; then upon the Despatching a great number of men, surprisedly retook it. Meg being a Lumberer in the town, strafed the bell of the woman with a halberd in her hand, came to the walls, on which some of the Frenchmen entered, and threw scalding water and stones at them, that she often obliged them to quit the town before the soldiers were in arms. And at the sally she came the foremost with her halberd in her hand to perfect the chace.

The report of this descent being come to ears of the King, he allowed her for eight-pence a day.

C H A P.

## C H A P. X.

Of her fighting and beating a Frenchman  
before Bologna.

**D**uring this, she observed one who  
with a bravado tossed his pike. She  
hastily deferred a drum to signify  
that no soldier would have a parley  
with him. It was agreed on, and  
place appointed life against life.

On the day the Frenchmen came,  
Meg met him, and without any  
further blows, and after a long con-  
tention, overcame him, and cut off his  
head, pulling off her basinet  
from her ears.

By this the Frenchmen knew it  
was Meg, and the English giving a  
signal by a Drummer, sent the Dauphin  
soldiers head, and said, An English  
man sent this to you.

The Dauphin much commended  
sending her an hundred crowns for  
valour.

## C H A P. XI.

her coming to England, and being  
Married.

THE wars in France being over,  
Meg came to Westminster, and  
met a soldier, who hearing of her  
visits, took her into a room, and mak-  
ing her strip to her petticoat, took one  
and gave her another, saying, As  
I had heard of her manhood, he was de-  
sirous to try her. — But Meg held  
her head, whereupon he gave her  
one or four blows, and then in submition  
lay down on her knees, desiring her to  
kiss her, For said she, whatever I do  
to you, it behoves me to be obedient  
to you, and it shall never be laid, If I  
ever a knave that shames me, Long  
is her husband's master; and therefore  
use me as you please. — So they grew  
old, and never quarrelled after.

## C H A P. XII.

Long Meg's Usage to an angry Miller.

MEG going one day with her neighbours to make merry, a miller at Epping looking out, the boy there with them about fourteen years old, Put out Miller, put out.—What miller put out, said he? A thief's head and said the other.

At this the Miller came down and kicked him, which Meg endeavouring to prevent, whereupon he beat her. She wrung the stick from him, and cudgelled him severely; and having sent the boy to the mill for an sack, and put the miller in an head; and then fastening him to the hawled him up half way, and left him hanging. The poor miller out for help, and if his wife had come, he had surely been killed at the mill for want of corn set on fire.

CHAP. XII. of whom for bad

## C H A P. XIII.

her keeping House at Islington, and her Lawyer. After Marriage she kept a house at Islington. The Constable coming night, he would needs search Meg's house, whereupon she came down in her shift, with a cudgel, and said Mr. Constable, take care you go not beyond your commission, for if you do, I'll so cudgel you as you never was since Islington has been.—The Constable seeing her frown, left her he would take her word, and so parted.

Meg, because in her house there should be a good decorum, hung up a table, containing these principles :

First. If a Gentleman or Yeoman had a carriage about him, and told her of it, she would repeat it, if he told her, but if he did not repeat it, and she told it, probably he should have ten shillings damages, and afterwards be turned out of doors.

Secondly, Whoever called for a man, and had no money to pay, should have

go home on the carriage and a one upon the back  
that he might be marked, and trusted  
more. C I I X . 9 . 1 3

But Thirdly, If any good fellow came in  
and said he wanted money, he should  
have his belly full of meat, and two  
drank. C I I X . 9 . 1 3  
gaily, If any knave came in,  
he would not say  
nothing, come into the fields and  
abode or two with Meg, the maid  
of the house should freely beat him, and  
knight him out of doors. C I I X . 9 . 1 3  
These and many such principles,  
established in her house, which kept  
her hand quiet. C I I X . 9 . 1 3

blood from the mouth. C I I X . 9 . 1 3  
She is a good girl. C I I X . 9 . 1 3

had money to make her



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